

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please AMEND claims 1,10,11, 20, 29, 30, 39, 48, and 49, in accordance with the following:

1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A related documents processing device comprising:
a detector detecting relevance among documents; and
a locator locating a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information,
wherein the documents are electronic mail ~~documents~~, and the relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail ~~documents~~.

2. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 1, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

3. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 2, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least a timewise order.

4. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 1, further comprising a display unit for displaying contents of the document located by the locator.

5. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 4, wherein the display unit displays the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.

6. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 5, wherein a specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit is processed as the selected document at the locator.

7. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 2, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

8. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 5, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

9. (CANCELED)

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The device according to Claim 1, wherein a timewise latest electronic mail ~~document~~ located by the locator is subjected to a return mail processing.

11. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A related documents processing device characterized in that it comprises:
a detector detecting relevance among documents; and
a document editor parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and for merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated,
wherein the documents are electronic mail ~~documents~~, and the relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail ~~documents~~.

12. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 11, wherein the document editor merges the documents according to an order of the related documents.

13. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 11, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

14. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 13, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the timewise order.

15. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 11, further comprising a display unit for displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The device according to Claim 15, wherein the document editor merges documents, including a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and the display unit displays the merged document.

17. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 13, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

18. (ORIGINAL) The device according to Claim 15, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

19. (CANCELED)

20. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable recording medium having a program recoded thereon, the program makes a computer function as:

a detector detecting relevance among documents; and
a locator locating a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information,

wherein the documents are electronic mail documents, and the relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail documents.

21. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 20, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

22. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 21, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the timewise order.

23. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 20, wherein the program further makes the computer function as a display unit for displaying contents of the document located by the locator.

24. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 23, wherein the display unit displays the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.

25. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 24, wherein a specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit is processed as the selected document at the locator.

26. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 21, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

27. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 24, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

28. (CANCELED)

29. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The recording medium according to Claim 28, wherein a timewise latest electronic mail ~~document~~ located by the locator is subjected to a return mail processing.

30. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A computer readable recording medium having a program recoded thereon, the program making a computer function as:

a detector detecting relevance among documents; and

a document editor parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated,

wherein the documents are electronic mail ~~documents~~, and the relevance information detected by the detector is an exchange history of the electronic mail ~~documents~~.

31. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 30, wherein the document editor merges the documents according to an order of the related documents.

32. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 30, wherein the documents have header information, and the detector detects the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

33. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 32, wherein the detector detects a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least a timewise order.

34. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 30, wherein the program further makes the computer function as a display unit for displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detector.

35. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The recording medium according to Claim 34, wherein the document editor merges documents, including a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the display unit and up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and the display unit displays the merged document.

36. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 32, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

37. (ORIGINAL) The recording medium according to Claim 34, wherein the detector detects a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputs the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the display unit displays the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

38. (CANCELED)

39. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for processing related documents, which comprises:

- a detecting step of detecting relevance among documents; and
- a locating step of locating a timewise latest document related to a document selected based on detected relevance information,

wherein the documents are electronic mail ~~documents~~, and the relevance information detected by the detecting step is an exchange history of the electronic mail ~~documents~~.

40. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 39, wherein the documents have header information, and the detecting step includes detecting the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

41. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 40, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least a timewise order.

42. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 39, the locating step includes a displaying step of displaying contents of the located document.

43. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to Claim 42, wherein the displaying step includes displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the relevance information detected by the detecting step.

44. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 43, wherein the locating step includes processing a specific document as the selected document, the specific document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view by the displaying step.

45. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 40, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

46. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 43, wherein the detecting step includes a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the displaying step includes displaying the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

47. (CANCELED)

48. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method according to Claim 47, wherein a timewise latest electronic mail ~~document~~ located by the locating step is subjected to a return mail processing.

49. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for processing related documents which comprises:

a detecting step of detecting relevance among documents; and
a merging step of parsing an overlapped portion among related documents based on detected relevance information and merging the documents with the overlapped portion eliminated,

wherein the documents are electronic mail ~~documents~~, and the relevance information detected by the detecting step is an exchange history of the electronic mail ~~documents~~.

50. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 49, wherein the merging step includes merging the documents according to an order of the related documents.

51. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 49, wherein the documents have header information, and the detecting step includes detecting the relevance among the documents based on the header information.

52. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 51, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a timewise order of the documents based on time information in the header information of each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the timewise order.

53. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 49, wherein the detecting step including displaying the relevance among the documents as a tree view based on the detected relevance information.

54. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method according to Claim 53, wherein the merging step includes merging documents, including a document selected among the documents displayed as a tree view up to a timewise latest document related to the selected document, and the displaying step includes displaying the merged document.

55. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 51, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state.

56. (ORIGINAL) The method according to Claim 53, wherein the detecting step includes detecting a branched state between documents based on an ID noted in the header information according to a uniqueness rule in each of the documents and outputting the relevance information including at least the detected branched state, and the displaying step includes displaying the relevance among the documents including the detected branched state as a tree view.

57. (CANCELED)